Ag Radio programs for October 5 - 11, 2015

Wheat Seeding Rates and seed treatments

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. A last chance reminder of the Grain Sorghum Field Day Friday in Manhattan. Call me at the Extension office for more details or to get registered. Wheat seeding is gearing up, there's no doubt about it. And from now through the next roughly three weeks, we are going to be in prime time for wheat seeding. First and foremost, I want every wheat seed that's placed in the ground to have a fungicidal seed treatment applied to it. There's just too many things that can go wrong that are easily remedied by that fungicidal wheat seed treatment. Get that seed treated, end of topic! Next we need to talk about seeding rate. Essentially, about every two weeks as we move through wheat seeding time, we need to ratchet up that seeding rate. Probably a 15% increase every two weeks is in the ball park of what you need to do. The later you plant the fewer tillers each plant will have. Therefore, to maintain yield with later plantings, you need to have more plants to get the optimal number of tillers, i.e. heads! You also need to adjust up seeding rates depending on the amount of crop residue you are planting into if you are no till seeding. Soybean residue doesn't require much increase BUT watch that seeding depth, which actually holds for all no till situations. If planting into corn residue, increase 15 to 20%. If planting into milo residue, increase seeding rates 25 to 30% and also increase total nitrogen applied. If you have any questions about what rate you should be planting, call me! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Timing The Last Alfalfa Cutting

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. That last cutting of alfalfa can always be kind of tricky. I remember seeing in Minnesota where stands had been hurt from late fall cutting. Granted, those conditions are going to be a bit harsher than what we get around here! But we can still end up cutting alfalfa a little on the late side and have it go into winter dormancy with less than a full stash of food reserves in the roots. There are many variations on how much growth or how much time we need after out last cutting before we have a killing freeze. But the challenge comes down to figuring out when that killing freeze is going to occur. Our annual first frost is around October 20th. But a killing freeze is colder than that, basically around 25 degrees. We need 350 to 400 growing degree days or 3 to 4 weeks of growth with typical October weather. So, if you look at the past 60 years worth of fall tempeatures, our average first date for a low below 26 degrees is going to be about November 5th. The problem is that it has been as early as October 6th and as late as December 7th. So what do you do? Over the past ten years, we've been running pretty close to that long term average. If you've got decent growth on your alfalfa, and can get it cut by the end of this week, do it. We would expect to have enough growth before those mid 20 temperatures come around that we should get reserves replenished. If you don't think you can get it done by the end of the week, or it's a new planting, or you're in a dry spot and not sure you'd get much regrowth, let it go. Then if you want, wait until the day before that cold snap and cut then. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck

Otte.

What is the best date for planting wheat?

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. I've had several people calling me over the past couple of weeks wanting to know if they could start planting wheat. My response, if they were grazing the wheat, was sure, go ahead. If they weren't grazing the wheat, my answer was no. The reason is very simple. The goal with wheat planting is to get it planted in a timely manner so that it will sprout, start growing, get a chance to develop some good secondary roots, as well as tiller development and then go dormant. If you plant too early, in the absence of grazing, you can get too much leaf growth and too many tillers initiated. This resulting excessive fall growth can wind up using up nitrogen and moisture that, depending on the year, could hurt you the next spring. Most years, our optimum planting date would be October 5th thru about October 20th. I'd really like to see all wheat in the ground by November 1st and wheat planting shut down after about November 10th. In studies in various parts of Kansas planting in the optimal time frame showed best yields with seeding rates in the 90 to 120 pounds per acre range (here we go with the pounds again and not actual seeding rates.) With later planting, best yields were obtained with 150 pounds of seed per acre. My feeling is that if you are planting into a clean till field you can probably get by with 80 pounds per acre at the start of the optimal time period. If you are planting into no-till, even in early October, I don't think it's unrealistic to start seeding rates at 90 pounds per acre and then start boosting rates up accordingly depending on date and amount of residue in the field! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.